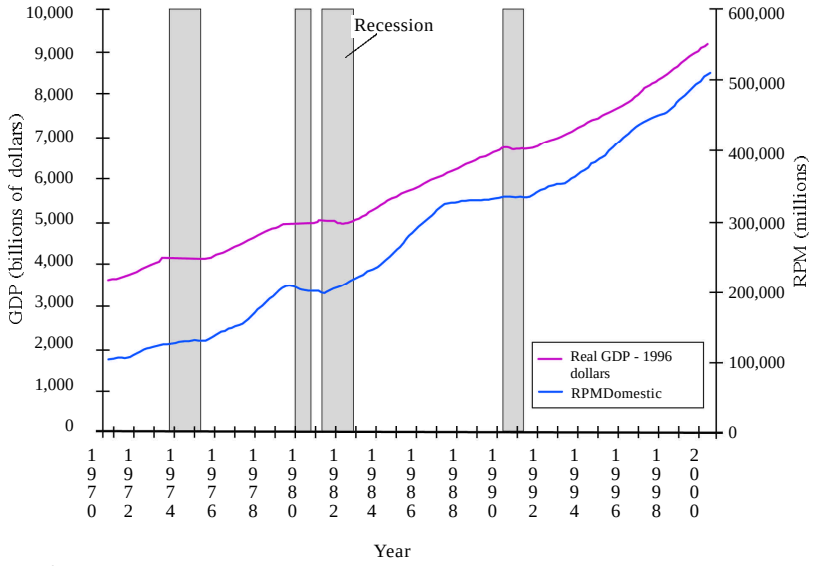
INTRODUCTION

America's strategy for meeting overall transportation needs emphasizes safe, secure and coordinated services while anticipating new demands and expectations. Within that strategy, the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) vision for aviation transportation builds on a foundation of safety, security and efficiency while modernizing our National Airspace System (NAS).

Gross Domestic Product and Domestic Revenue Passenger Miles
1970-2000



Data from Air Transport Association

Prior to September 11, the NAS would handle 1.9 million passengers, 40 thousand tons of cargo, and 60 thousand non-scheduled flights through the system daily. Demand at the busiest airports and congested airspace led to delays and a lack of efficiency, flexibility, and predictability throughout the NAS, especially during peak flight times and severe weather conditions. These delays disrupted airline operations, passenger plans, and the U.S. economy. To meet those challenges, and the increasing operational complexity of the NAS, the FAA and the entire aviation community worked together to create the Operational Evolution Plan (OEP) released to the public in June 2001.

While some priorities have shifted in light of September 11 and changing economics have forced some delays in equipage and new technologies, traffic and demand are already on the rebound and expected to reach previously projected levels. The OEP assumes we are staying the course to build an aviation system for the 21st century with efficiency and capacity improvements needed to mitigate anticipated congestion.

The OEP is organized into four problem clusters, or quadrants:

- Arrival/Departure Rates
- En Route Congestion
- Airport Weather Conditions
- En Route Severe Weather

Each quadrant is composed of solution sets representing commitments of the aviation community to operational changes that enhance efficiency and increase NAS capacity. Solutions sets also include benefits, schedules and key decisions.

More detail is provided at http://www.faa.gov/programs/oep

Near-Term Plans (2002):

- ***Improved precision approaches***
- ***Widespread use of Free Flight tools***

Mid-Term Plans (2003-2004):

- ***Optimize airspace design***
- ***Reduced vertical separation***
- ***Enhanced navigation procedures***

Long-Term Plans (2005-2010):

- ***Data communications***
- ***Satellite navigation***
- ***Enhanced surveillance***

WHAT'S CHANGED

The operational evolution is proceeding as planned with few exceptions. Significant 2001 improvements implemented as planned include the new Detroit runway, additional choke point sectors, Traffic Management Advisor (TMA) operations, Area Navigation (RNAV) routes at more than 24 airports, summer 2001 collaboration efforts and many more changes. The exceptions were Passive Final Approach Spacing Tool (pFAST) and

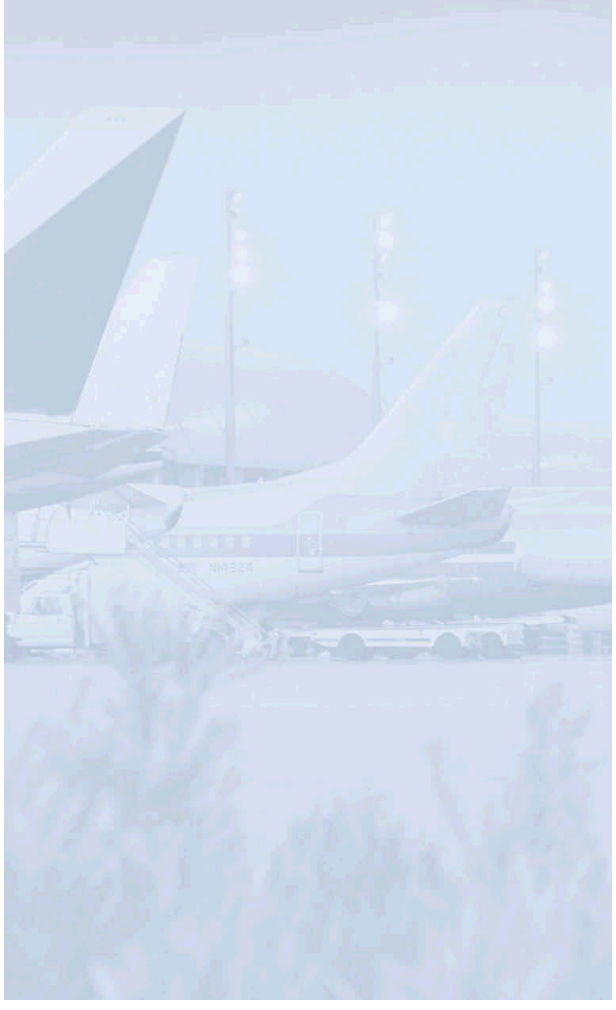
Delay has been concentrated at these airports.

Airport	Annual Arrival Delay Rate*		Average Arrival Minutes Late	
	All 2000	Jan-Aug 2001	All 2000	Jan-Aug 2001
Atlanta	27%	24%	15.4	13.5
Boston	33%	28%	19.6	16.6
Newark	29%	25%	18.0	15.9
Kennedy	29%	29%	16.8	17.5
Los Angeles	30%	26%	16.3	13.3
La Guardia	42%	29%	26.4	17.9
O'Hare	33%	26%	20.0	16.5
Philadelphia	30%	26%	16.9	14.9
San Francisco	35%	25%	21.9	15.7

Source: Aviation System Performance Metrics

***Arriving at the gate more than 15 minutes after scheduled arrival time.**

Note: October/November 2001 delay rates and average arrival minutes are down an average of 44 percent and 48 percent, respectively, when compared with October/November 2000.



Gulf of Mexico communications. Operational use of pFAST did not begin as planned, however, implementation of an alternative solution has yielded positive results and a geographic expansion is underway. Completion of Gulf communications buoys will extend into 2002.

Priorities are shifting as the community adjusts to changes in traffic demand and economic conditions. Some airports have accelerated runway improvements (Houston), while others have slipped (Minneapolis). New decisions about the use of tools and technologies were made to improve efficiency more quickly. For example, the FAA decided to complete the deployment of User Request Evaluation Tool (URET) at all 20 en route centers by 2004 and plans for the initial use of 30/30 separation in the Pacific have been accelerated to 2005. Also, the community is committed to trials of data link Build 1 in Miami as scheduled, and a continuation of Build 1 operations to further refine and enhance data link use with more aircraft coming online. Build 1A follows in December, 2005.

Overall, greater detail and distinctions in status has been added to the OEP to firm up mid and long term objectives, and to distinguish firm commitments from planning activities. In particular, details were added to the descriptions for research and operational trials for surface movement and situational awareness, the use of cockpit displays and the coming severe weather season. To balance workload, responsibility for the surface movement and situational awareness solutions has been moved to the Terminal Business Unit.